

Apart from the results of Christian teaching and example, there can be, I think, no doubt that the residence of righteous foreigners in Urmi for over half a century has had a most beneficial effect on the condition of the Nestorians. At the time when the first American missionaries settled in Urmi the yoke of Islam was hardly bearable. The Christians were oppressed and plundered, their daughters were taken by violence, and they were scarcely allowed to practise the little religion left to them. The Persian Government, sensitive as it is to European opinion, has gradually remedied a state of matters upon which the reports of the missionaries were justly to be dreaded, and at the present time the Christians of Urmi and the adjacent plain have comparatively very little to complain of.

At the same time the Syriac Church was at its lowest ebb, absolutely sunk in ignorance and superstition. It had no exposition of the Bible, and all worship was in the ancient Syriac tongue, then as now "not understood of the people." It had no books or any ability to establish schools. Bibles were scarce, and a single copy of the Psalms could not be bought for less than 32s. The learned nuns and deaconesses of the early days were without successors. Women were entirely neglected, and it was regarded as improper for the younger among them to be seen at church. In Urmi not a woman could read, and in the whole Nestorian region they were absolutely illiterate, with the exception of the

Patriarch's sister and  
two or three nuns.

mission as teachers, preachers, or pastors, and more than  
half of these  
continue, and are members of our Synod. In some places  
the Reform has  
gathered nearly all the population within its influence.  
In many places  
it is not unusual to find half the population in our  
winter services. On  
the other hand, there are many places where the  
ecclesiastics are immoral  
and opposed, and ignorance and vice abound, and the  
Reform moves very  
slowly."